



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/661,118	09/12/2003	Paul O. Davison	A-21-1	6449
21394	7590	01/13/2006	EXAMINER	
ARTHROCARE CORPORATION 680 VAQUEROS AVENUE SUNNYVALE, CA 94085-3523				ROLLINS, ROSILAND STACIE
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
				3739

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/661,118	DAVISON ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Rosiland S. Rollins	3739	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 November 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/2/04; 2/5/04.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: IDS 10/14/03.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Species XX in the reply filed on 11/01/05 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 10, 13, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fanton et al. (US 6068628). Fanton et al. disclose an electrosurgical instrument for applying electrical energy to tissue comprising a tissue-contacting surface (18), at least one active electrode (22) recessed within the tissue-contacting surface and having a curved configuration and a return electrode (24) positioned about the tissue-contacting surface.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Doss (US 4381007). In figures 7 & 8, Doss discloses an electrosurgical instrument for applying electrical energy to tissue comprising a tissue-contacting surface (70), at least one active electrode (72) recessed

within the tissue-contacting surface and having a curved configuration, a return electrode (74) spaced apart from the at least one active electrode and a vent (80).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fanton et al. in view of Doss. Fanton et al. teach all of the limitations of the claim except a fluid source for providing electrically conductive fluid between the return electrode and the at least one active electrode. Doss teaches that it is old and well known in the art to provide a source of electrically conductive fluid between the return electrode and the active electrode to cool and protect the tissue. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a source of electrically conductive fluid with the Fanton et al. device as taught by Doss to protect the tissue being treated.

Claims 21-23 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fanton et al. Fanton et al. teach all of the limitations of the claims except the support being ceramic. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a ceramic material for the insulative support of Fanton et al., since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to

select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rosiland S. Rollins whose telephone number is (571) 272-4772. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Rosiland S. Rollins
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3739